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(54) Billing system for information transmitted by radio transmissions and for other services

System zur Gebührenabrechnung für funkübertragene Information und für andere Dienste

Système de facturation pour de l'information transmise par radio et pour autre services

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- **16TH INTERNATIONAL TV SYMPOSIUM June 1989 , MONTREUX ,SWITZERLAND pages 524 - 535 R.KOCHAN 'VALUE-ADDED SERVICES AND FUNCTIONS FOR MATV AND CATV SYSTEMS'**

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Description

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed to technical arrangements which provide the efficient billing system of service rate on an individual-piece-of-information basis or on a unit-of-information basis in a variety of information service ranging from music to video to text including news by means of radio communications, particularly by satellite communications. The present invention is also directed to the billing system for public utilities rates.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

Radio broadcasting, television broadcasting, and satellite communications using communications satellites are now in widespread use. Billing service fees and then collecting them in a timely manner are the major problem associated with radio communications, because radio communications are not provided with the comparable system that is normally used by telephone lines where communications are performed on the basis of handshake under the control of telephone exchanges. In television broadcasting, it is common and established practice to bill and collect fees on each television set based on the assumption that concerned channels are selected and watched on the television set by viewers or users since it was installed. There are some systems, now in use, of satellite broadcasting service, in which signals are scrambled before transmission, and the user terminal is equipped with a de-scrambler which de-scrambles the received signal. In this case, a predetermined monthly rate of fee is billed.

The first system described above, however, suffers poor performance in collecting information service fees, because payment of the fees is entirely dependent on the user's own will. The second system of using a descrambler puts the burden of installing the de-scrambler on the receiver, incurring extra cost on him. This can restrict the commercial expansion of the number of subscribers.

The conventional fee systems are generally fixed amount fee per month systems, which do not allow fees to be flexibly set depending on type of information and do not allow fees to be paid at a flexible timing. This prevents the information provider from intensively broadcasting costly pieces of information, from the commercial point of view. If the information provider limits the broadcasting of popular information or programs, no commercial expansion in subscription can be expected.

Those who particularly need information management for each individual customer are public utilities such as electricity, gas and water services. Every household and office essentially requires water and energy supply such as gas and electricity. Public utilities rates for these items are now collected separately on an individual basis. An information provider may efficiently perform fee collection if the information service fee mentioned above is added to the utility rate of any item and then they are collected together. Such an efficient fee collection system may allow the information provider to get cost return for an investment as scheduled. With fees collected as scheduled, the information provider may have a good chance of scheduling operation of his capital which may be invested further to provide even more value-added information to subscribers.

In its preset form of fee collection system for a public utility service, each consumer is equipped with a utility meter which indicates how much electricity, gas or water has been consumed. The consumer pays for the amount indicated. More specifically, a public utilities company periodically reads the meter of each consumer for the difference between the current reading and the previous reading, and bills the charge corresponding to the difference to each consumer. In this case, a reader must go to each consumer's place for reading meters one by one.

In present day environment in which a vast amount of information is now exchanged in a fast and accurate manner by electronic telecommunications means, the reading of utility meters, that is used as a basis for fee calculation, may not necessarily entirely dependent on readers. In other words, public utilities companies may not need a number of readers dedicated to meter reading operation, may save time and cost required for the operation, and may save a vast amount of personnel expenses. This may help to restrict price rising of public utilities service, and lead to an economical benefit to every consumer.

EP-A-0 180 460 discloses decoders for pay television systems, wherein a procedure is described, wherein a pay-per-view status signal is sent from the broadcast centre to each user who can select to watch an associated program. During the user watches the selected program, charge data transmitted with the subscribed program is stored in an account memory of the decoder. The centre periodically checks the contents of the memory of each decoder, using a telephone line, and collects fees or bills the applicable charge.

Further, EP-A-0 180 460 discloses a decoder control circuit which descrambles a selected program transmitted from a broadcast centre, and the decoder receives and decodes data transmitted from the centre. The control data include at least program fee data and program status data. Cash data transmitted from the centre is stored in an advance cash memory. Upon receipt of a selected program a program fee is subtracted from the stored cash data by a central processing unit. When the contents of the advance money memory are less than a predetermined value a warning display is output.

US-A-4 928 177 discloses two-way data broadcast networks, wherein data is sent from a main unit having

a data base to individual stations and from the stations to terminals of the subscribers. At the terminal data is decoded by a data decoder. A plurality of services are provided by the network. There is disclosed how a user can use the network on an interactive basis, i.e. a user can "play" with data and the data can, after being processed by a main unit, be received as processed or formatted data. Thus, US-A-4 928 177 shows the possibility of transmitting processed data from a main unit and vice versa.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Starting from a billing system as it is known from EP-A-0 180 460, it is the object of the present invention to provide a billing system which allows proper billing on the basis of the frequency of access for information and unit prices of individual pieces of information a user receives, without the need of a monthly fee system or any deposit means.

This object is achieved by a billing system as described in claim 1. Advantageous further developments of the present invention are described in the dependent claims.

The billing system in radio communications comprises a main unit made up of a host computer for storing various types of data and a transceiver unit for radio link, and a plurality of terminal units for receiving the various types of data, wherein the main unit transmits each of the various types of data tagged with its unique data identification code; each of the plurality of terminal units, having its own unique terminal identification code, stores sequentially all data identification codes of the data read into the terminal unit out of the data transmitted from the main unit, and, receiving the control signal which the main unit transmits at regular intervals to request the transfer of utilization status information, each of the plurality of the terminal units forms data streams comprising stored data identification codes, each including terminal identification code.

Especially, the present invention comprises a main unit, equipped with a database of toll value-added information, transmits a requested information- retrieved from the database in response to a request of any of a plurality of terminal units, and the plurality of terminal units which receive the toll value-added information sent in response to their own requests and then perform required processing, wherein the main unit has an input port in a request receiver block to which a telephone line is directly coupled, and further comprises an acting value-added information service billing line; the plurality of terminal units have their own unique terminal identification codes, value-added information transmitted from the main unit includes the terminal identification code of a requesting terminal unit, and fee information corresponding to the value-added information transmitted, the requesting terminal unit, after completion of processing the received value-added information, sends the fee information to the main unit via the telephone line, and the main unit connects the input port to the acting value-added billing line for a duration of time according to the fee information received.

Further, according to the present invention each of the plurality of terminal units may be provided with a utilization status counter for storing data identification codes of data actually used; the terminal unit calculates service fee based on the stored data identification codes in the utilization status counter referring to fee conversion data which the main unit transmits at regular intervals; the service fee information is sent to a fee conversion adaptor connected to the terminal unit, the signal provided from the adaptor is used to control the meter which indicates the public utilities rate of, typically, the consumption of any one of electricity, gas and water supplies.

In a further aspect of the present invention the main unit may be coupled to the plurality of terminal units via both a radio link and a telephone line; each of the plurality of terminal units is provided with a digital meter which measures consumption of one or more types of public utilities services, typically electricity, gas and water supplies, and further provided with a memory for storing a consumed amount as consumption data; each of the plurality of terminal units is provided with means which uploads the consumption data stored in the memory to the main unit via the telephone line in response to a control signal which the main unit transmits as a satellite signal; and each of the plurality of terminal units is provided with delay means which determines the timing at which each of the plurality of terminal units accesses the main unit and each delay means provides different delay time constant.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig.1 is a block diagram showing generally the present invention.

Fig.2 is a block diagram showing a main unit.

Fig.3 is a block diagram showing a terminal unit.

Fig.4 is a block diagram showing another terminal unit.

Fig.5 shows the structure of data transmitted and received.

Fig.6 is a block diagram showing the terminal unit according to a first embodiment of the present invention.

Fig.7 is a block diagram showing the main unit according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

Fig.8 shows the data structure according to the first embodiment of the present invention.

Fig.9 is a block diagram showing the terminal unit according to a second embodiment of the present invention.

Fig.10 is a block diagram showing an alternative to the second embodiment of the present invention.

Fig.11 is a block diagram showing generally the entire system according to a third embodiment of the

present invention.

Fig.12 is a block diagram showing the terminal unit of the system of Fig.11.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring now to the drawings, embodiments of billing systems and of the present invention are discussed below. Fig.1 is a block diagram showing an embodiment of a billing system wherein satellite communications are employed. The embodiment comprises a communications satellite 1 at a determined orbit, main unit 2 at the transmitter side functioning as a host station, and a receiving terminal unit 3 provided for each user. Although a single terminal unit 3 is shown in Fig.1, a plurality of terminal units, in practice, may be provided in a parallel configuration. As shown in Fig.2, the main unit 2 essentially comprises a host computer 4, a database 5 under the control of the host computer 4, a transmitter 6, and an antenna 7 for satellite communications. A multichannel broadcasting is possible by setting up a plurality of channels if the transponder of the satellite 1 is fully made use of. In this case, the main unit 2 assigns different types of information to different channels, and transmits multichannel signals to the communications satellite 1. A variety of information may be assigned to the plurality of channels. For example, in karaoke music, a tune is assigned to one channel with its associated words assigned to another; and in computer video game, data and programs are assigned to separate channels. In these examples, the user is afforded a choice of which channel to select.

Referring now to Fig.3, the construction of the terminal unit 3 is detailed below. Via an receiving/transmitting antenna 8, a tuner 9 receives satellite signals derived from the main unit 2. Signals to be transmitted can be image data such as video signals, and digital signals such as data required for the operation of karaoke or computer video games. It is assumed that the tuner 9 has a structure capable of receiving simultaneously a plurality of channels. A received data processing block 10, having memory means such as a buffer memory, saves temporarily each data when multichannel signals are simultaneously processed, and processes data streams, such as headers and footers, which are used for communication. Furthermore, the received data processing block 10 performs essential processing functions such as de-scrambling the received data and extracting required information if the received data are scrambled. A control CPU 11 controls the entire terminal unit. A signal processing block 12 comprises, in a parallel configuration, a video signal processing circuit, a karaoke signal processing circuit, and video game signal processing circuit, with each circuit processing the corresponding type of received signal. The signal processing circuits have respective output terminals 13 as many as required. To pick up the video output, a display unit is simply connected to the video output terminal. To enjoy computer video games, a video game machine is simply connected to the video game output terminal. A control panel and a display panel are designated 14 and 15, respectively. Keys disposed on the control panel 14 are manipulated to select desired information referring to an information listing presented on the display panel 15. A transmitter 16 sends the data regarding the information service which the terminal unit 3 has received, from the terminal unit 3 toward the main unit 2. A radiowave bearing the data is transmitted through the antenna 8 of the transmitter 16.

Described below is the operation of the billing system for toll information service which are exchanged between the main unit 2 and the terminal unit 3. Each terminal unit has its own unique terminal identification code (ID). The main unit 2 transmits various types of information (data) on different channels. Each data the main unit 2 transmits contains its unique data identification code. When the terminal unit 3 receives the data and processes them, CPU 11 or the memory block (not shown) under the control of CPU 11 stores the utilization information. Next, the main unit 2 transmits to the terminal unit 3 at regular intervals a control signal to request the sending of utilization information. Upon receiving the control signal, the terminal unit 3 constructs the utilization information, such as data identification codes, that have been stored since the penultimate control signal, into data streams, by adding a header and a footer to each data stream, and then transmits the data stream to the main unit 2. In this case, the terminal ID unique to each terminal unit is included as additional information in the data stream. Receiving the data stream from the terminal unit, the main unit 2 recognizes the ID, and performs required processing to the utilization information on a per ID basis to calculate service fee at regular intervals.

Several methods are available to calculate service fees from utilization status information, and which method to use is an arbitrary option. In a first method, the utilization information contains data indicative of the frequency of utilization per data identification code based on the data identification code information, the main unit 2 stores, as a data table, a service fee pricing table itemized by each data identification code, and the main unit 2 determines the sum referring to the data table. In a second method, each terminal unit 3 performs service fee calculation. Each terminal unit 3 stores a data table identical to the one in the main unit in the first method, refers to the data table in response to a control signal received from the main unit 2 to sum service fee, and sends the data indicative of the resulting sum. The second method provides to the user a convenience which allows the user to monitor utilization status by checking summed service fee. This embodiment is exemplified in satellite communications. Alternatively, however, other radio communications such as FM radio communications may replace satellite communications without any modification in essential system configuration of the em-

bodiment.

In the embodiment, the main unit 2 offers an immediate monitoring of the utilization status of each terminal unit, and no manual intervention is required in the calculation of service fee. If summed service fee is output in hardcopy in a proper bill format, that bill format may be directly used as an actual bill, leading the saving of cost and labor involved in the issue of bills. It is also contemplated that the utilization status information of each terminal unit is uploaded via a telephone line rather than via a radio link. This may occupy partly the operation time that would be otherwise entirely available for normal telephone service. If the efficiency problem in traffic is not very important, however, there are no other major problems against the use of the telephone line.

Next, another embodiment of a billing system for efficient billing of information service fee will be discussed below. The essential configuration of the another embodiment is identical to that shown in Fig.1. The structure of the main unit is identical to that of Fig.2. The configuration of the terminal unit is shown in Fig.4. In the figure, a tuner 42 connected to a receiving antenna 41 is a device to receive the signal (data) transmitted from the main unit 2. It is assumed that data to be transmitted can be digitized data such as those of video, karaoke and video game. A digital data processing block, indicated at 43, comprising a buffer memory and the like, decodes the satellite signal provided by the tuner 42 into a valid digital signal, processes the headers and footers which have been used for communications, and extracts required information from data streams. A control CPU 44 controls the entire terminal unit. A signal processing block 45 comprises, in a parallel configuration, a digital video signal processing circuit 45a, a digital karaoke signal processing circuit 45b, and a digital video game signal processing circuit 45c, with each circuit processing the corresponding type of received signal. The signal processing circuits have respective output terminals 46a, 46b and 46c. To pick up the video output, a display unit is simply connected to the video output terminal. To enjoy computer video games, a video game machine is simply connected to the video game output terminal. A control panel and a display panel are designated 47 and 48, respectively. Keys and buttons disposed on the control panel 47 are manipulated to select desired information referring to an information listing presented on the display panel 48. The above configuration remains essentially unchanged from the first embodiment in Fig.3, except that the previous embodiment is provided with the transmitter 16 used for transmission from the terminal unit 3 to the main unit 2. No transmitter is included in the terminal unit in the second embodiment.

Next, the operation of the billing system of information service fee is discussed. In Fig.4, a utilization status memory 49 counts the use of each signal processing block 45 and stores the total count per signal processing circuit. Total service fee per any desired period of time is calculated based on the stored count of utilization. Each frame of digital data contains data identification code corresponding to the type of information. The structure of data frame is described referring to Fig.5. It is assumed that a single channel handles digital data formed of information types A through D. Information type A is sound data, B video game data, C image data, and D karaoke data. The image data C includes digitized video data. Each data consists of a data body 50a, a header 50b and a footer 50c. The header 50b contains a data identification code, as pricing information, as well as control information. Each data identification code indicates whether the service of the data is chargeable by unit of data or by unit of time. For example, in a data type having a relatively small amount of data, typically video game data, reading the entire data at a time and then processing it in a receiver side are not only an easy process but also an essential requirement, because of the structure of the data. Thus, the service fee may be priced by unit of data, and the corresponding data identification code is added. On the other hand, in a data type having a vast amount of data, typically image data, reading the entire data at a time and then processing it result in a poor efficiency. Thus, data streams has a structure such that an automatic interrupt such as the suspension of execution is allowed. The service fee is priced by time, and thus the corresponding data identification code is added. The data identification code described above is judged by the digital data processing block 43, and the utilization status memory 49 stores the data identification codes of the data, which are processed by the control CPU 44, out of all the received data. This storage is performed separately on a per data type basis. Once the information service fee is calculated, for example, based on the fee conversion data from the main unit, the information service fee data may be uploaded to the main unit via a telephone line, and the main unit may bill the total fee at regular intervals. For payment of information service fee, IC cards such as a prepaid card may be employed at the terminal unit. The payment method is not very important in the present context.

Digitized data of various types of information are exchanged as described above. With the aid of computers, a sender side (an information provider) can relatively easily control and transmit in a digital form a medium containing a vast amount of information, such as image data, thereby achieving fast and high-quality communications. A receiver side (a user of information service) can process and execute the received data at a high speed, and benefits from many applications of the received data. Transmitted signal is associated with data identification code to identify the type of data, and the utilization status memory provided in the terminal unit stores the data identification codes of the data, which have been actually used, out of all the received data. Thus, an efficient billing system is provided in which the information provider can bill the information service fee accurately in agreement with the information service ac-

tually given to a user who in turn can pay accordingly.

Discussed next is the first embodiment of the present invention which embodiment has elements in common with the previously described billing systems. Fig.6 is a block diagram of a user device, namely, a terminal unit. The terminal unit comprises a transmitting/receiving antenna 61, a transceiver block 62 for satellite signals, an analyzing block 63 of satellite signals, a buffer memory 64 for storing temporarily data to be transmitted or received, a memory block 65 of transmitted data and received data, and a control CPU 66 for controlling the entire unit to perform required processing to data. An output port 67 is used to couple with external devices. Referring to Fig.7, the configuration of the main unit working as a host station is described below. The main unit comprises a transmitting/receiving antenna 71 for the host station, a receiver block 72 for receiving signals from the terminal unit, a transmitter block 73 for transmitting control signal as well as transmitting information the terminal unit requests, a database 74 for storing user information and information to be supplied to the terminal unit, an acting billing processing block 75 for billing the information service fee for value-added information via a public telephone line, based on the fee information sent from the terminal unit of each user, and a CPU 76 for controlling each block of the host station. The host station is linked to an acting value-added billing network N owned by a public telephone company. Also shown in the figure are a normal telephone line 77 and an acting value-added billing line 78. In this application, the acting value-added billing is defined as the manner in which when a user calls a host station as an information provider at a particular telephone number, an information service fee on a unit of time basis is added to normal telephone line fee while the line is connected, and the telephone office has responsibility for collecting the summed fee. If the terminal unit in Fig.6 is of a type which is capable of receiving a plurality of data types, it may include a plurality of signal processing circuits arranged in a parallel configuration.

In order for the host station to collect the information service fee from the terminal unit of a user in the system described above, the host station must first register its own acting value-added billing line 78 at the telephone office, and gets an authorized number. When the terminal unit requests toll information stored in the database by sending a data identification code to the host station, the host station verifies the data identification code and then transmits requested information to the main unit according to a predetermined communication protocol. Fig.8 shows an example of the structure of the transmitted data. The data includes a header a, followed by terminal address information b including terminal ID, data type information c including data type information identifying the type of transmitted data, and information service fee, a body of data d, an error correcting code e and a footer f. As seen from the data structure, packet communication, in principle, is used to prevent error in data transfer. Receiving the data, the terminal unit matches the terminal address information c against its own ID. Any packet having a match is received and processed by the control CPU 66. The satellite signal analyzing block 63 skips in its reading operation any packet having no match with own ID, thereby avoiding unauthorized use of information service.

When the terminal unit has received data in sound state without disturbance on them, the terminal unit transmits the information service fee data of the data type information c to the host station. Receiving the information service fee data from the terminal unit at its receiver block 72, the host station connects the input port to the telephone line to call the acting value-added billing line 78 with which the host station has been registered. It should be noted that the information service fee is billed as per the duration in which the input port remains connected to the acting value-added billing line 78. Either the host station or the terminal unit translates the information service fee into time, and during the resulting time the acting value-added billing line 78 is connected. The telephone line 77 is considered as the telephone line which is utilized by the terminal unit, since the input port is released according to the received data from the terminal unit. In this embodiment, a billing operation is performed each time the terminal unit requests toll information service. Alternatively, for convenience, the terminal unit may upload the information service fee data to the host station at regular intervals.

In the first embodiment, the host station performs billing operation based on the data received from the terminal unit after verifying that the terminal unit has received valid data of toll information, rather than when the transfer of the toll information to the terminal unit is completed. This is for communications security reasons. By basing billing on the information derived from the terminal unit, potential problems in connection with fee calculations are avoided. The system of the first embodiment allows the information service fee billing operation to be performed with the terminal unit playing a major part in process with the aid of satellite bidirectional communications. Thus, problems involved in fee calculations are greatly reduced, compared with the system in which the host station calculates information service fee. Furthermore, since the telephone office functions as an agency for billing and collecting information service fee, the host station is freed from billing operation. Thus, efficient information providing results. Since telephone line are required only between the host station and a regional telephone office in charge, this system is readily installed to a place where there has been difficulty installing a telephone line. This system can thus expand the toll information service of various types.

In the systems described above, the fee of value-added information is singly billed. The inventors are now disclosing the additional features of the second embodiment of the invention which is based on the first embodiment in which second embodiment the information

service fee can be integrated into the public utilities rate system of electricity, gas, water supplies and the like, and the total sum is billed and collected. The system uses the essential configuration shown in Fig.1, wherein a main unit communicates with each terminal unit via a satellite. Different from the counterparts in the preceding systems, the terminal unit may be installed at home. Fig. 9 shows a structure of the terminal unit. A tuner, indicated at 91, is a device for receiving the signal transmitted from the main unit 2. Although no antenna is shown in Fig.9, an antenna is required if satellite communications are employed. The signal to be transmitted may be in the form of video signal when image data are handled, and in the form of digital signal when karaoke or video game data are handled. The tuner 91 is capable of receiving simultaneously a plurality of channels. A received data processing block 92 having a buffer memory performs essential functions, such as saving temporarily each data when multichannel signals are simultaneously received, processing data streams including headers and footers, and extracting required information from the received data. A control CPU 93 controls the entire terminal unit. A signal processing block 94 comprises, in a parallel configuration, a video signal processing circuit 94a, a karaoke signal processing circuit 94b, and video game signal processing circuit 94c, with each circuit processing the corresponding type of received signal. The signal processing circuits have respective output terminals 95a, 95b, and 95c. A control panel and a display panel are designated 96 and 97, respectively. Keys disposed on the control panel 96 are manipulated to select desired information referring to an information listing presented on the display panel 97.

A mode of operation enabled by the second embodiment is now described. In Fig.9, a utilization status counter 98 counts the use of each signal processing block 94 and stores the total count per signal processing circuit. Information service fee is calculated based on the stored count of utilization, according to the fee conversion data transmitted from the main unit 2 at regular intervals. The data on which the count of utilization is based (namely, the data identification codes used to count the utilizations of each processing circuit) are inserted into the signal to be transmitted by the main unit. For example, each data frame contains the data identification code corresponding to the type of data. Data output by the tuner 91 are processed by the control CPU93, and the data the control panel 96 selects is then further processed by the corresponding processing circuit of 94a through 94c. The utilization status counter 98 stores the total number per data identification code as the number of utilization data. When for example, for a certain period of time, karaoke was used N times and video game was enjoyed M times, the utilization status counter 98 stores, as frequency of utilization data, karaoke N, video game M. In addition, the stored data identification codes and the fee conversion data regularly transmitted from the transmitter side are cross-referenced on a data table to determine the information service fee at regular intervals.

The information service fee is determined by the utilization status counter 98. As soon as the information service is determined, it is sent, in the form of digital signal, to a fee conversion adaptor 99. The fee conversion adaptor 99 is connected to an AC watthour meter 100 to control it. A household integrating wattmeter in widespread use is an AC integrating wattmeter which employs the induction of shifting magnetic field. An integrating wattmeter is typically made of an aluminum disk, potential and current coils, and a counting device. The aluminum disk rotates at a speed proportional to the product of the magnetic flux of the potential coil and the magnetic flux of the current coil, with both coils connected to a network to be measured. Watthour is measured by counting the number of revolutions of the aluminum disk. Thus, the wattmeter is an analog machine. To control such a conventional integrating wattmeter, the fee conversion adaptor 99 converts the digital information service fee data into analog data which are applied to the integrating wattmeter 100 to control it. More specifically, the information service fee output in a digital form are converted into a current, corresponding to the power consumption equivalent to the information service fee using the number of revolutions of the aluminum disk as a parameter, and then the resulting current is applied to the integrating wattmeter 100. The information service fee determined in the terminal unit is thus sent, in the form of current, to the integrating wattmeter. The wattmeter therefore indicates the total watthour, and consequently a utility company bills and collects the integrated fee including the information service fee. This embodiment adopts a known system in which the utility company pays to the information provider the amount with the actual electricity rate plus agent service charge deducted. The host station preferably transmits the fee conversion data to each terminal unit in synchronism with billing time or meter reading time. In summary, in this embodiment the information service fee is determined based on the type of information provided, and the total information service fee for a predetermined period of time is converted into watthour amount, and the current value corresponding to it is sent to the integrating watthour meter.

In the second embodiment, the fee conversion adaptor 99 converts the information service fee into a current which can be directly convertible to watthour amount. The fee conversion adaptor 99 applies the resulting current to the AC integrating wattmeter 100. To achieve an improved efficiency in billing, however, information service fee may be supplied to an integrating meter of other utilities service than electricity.

Fig.10 shows an alternative embodiment to the second embodiment, wherein a digital integrating meter, replacing an analog integrating meter, indicates the utility rate of any one of electricity, gas and water supplies, and the information service fee is supplied to the digital

integrating meter. Shown in Fig.10 are a fee conversion adaptor 101, a digital integrating meter 102 and an analog integrating meter which indicates the utility rate of any one of electricity, gas and water supplies. The terminal unit 3, which is used to provide information service and then indicates service fee involved, is identical to the one used in the second embodiment where the AC watthour meter 100 is employed. The fee conversion adaptor 101, connected to the digital integrating meter 102, converts the information service fee into a digital signal equivalent to any one of the consumed amounts of watthour, gas volume and water volume, depending on the type of utilities service the meter is intended for. Namely, the fee conversion adaptor 101 converts the information service fee into the amount compatible with the integrating meter 102 in use, and controls the integrating meter 102. If an already existing analog integrating meter 103 is used in parallel, billing operation is performed according to the frequency of utilization.

In this embodiment, the information service fee is converted into data compatible with the integrating meter of a public utilities service, typically electricity, gas or water supply, and each utility company bills and collects the total fee. The user therefore may get information service without altering the payment method for the conventional utilities service. The information provider benefits from improved fee collection rate.

The second embodiment presents a system in which the information service fee can be added to the public utilities rates. The third embodiment adds to the system features by which a public utilities rate only is efficiently billed and collected. Fig.II is a block diagram showing the entire system. Shown in the figure are a communications satellite 1, a main unit 2 at the transmitter side, and a terminal unit 3 at the receiver side, and these are identical to those already described in the preceding embodiments. Also shown are a telephone line 111 and a telephone network 112, and the telephone line 11 serves as a communications link between the main unit 2 and the terminal unit 3. The main unit 2 has comprises the configuration blocks which are identical to those shown in Fig.2. The main unit 2 transmits a control signal to the terminal unit 3 via the communications satellite 1. The control signal essentially contains a command for causing the terminal unit 3 to upload the utilization status data stored to the main unit 2. No particular requirements, for example, on signal specifications, are imposed on the control signal. When there are a large number of subscribers, the control signal is preferably a digital form. Referring to Fig.12, an internal structure of the terminal unit 3 is detailed below. A tuner 122 receives via a receiving antenna 121 satellite signal, namely the control signal, which is derived from the main unit 2. Optionally, a tuner 122 may be used that is capable of receiving not only the control signal, namely text data, but also signals of general nature, such as music and image. The use of such a tuner type does not make any difference in the context of the present invention. A received data processing block 123, having a buffer memory, performs essential processing such as saving temporarily each data the tuner 122 has processed, and organizing data streams, such as headers and footers, which are used for communication in order to extract required information only. A digital integrating meter 124 indicates a consumed amount of public utilities service, that is, consumed watthour for electricity, consumed gas volume for gas supply, or consumed water volume for water supply. The digital integrating meter 124 counts the consumed amount in a digital form as utilization data. A CPU 125 controls the entire terminal unit 3. The utilization data counted by the digital integrating meter 124 is stored onto a RAM memory 126 through the CPU 125. The utilization data stored in the RAM 126 are transferred to the main unit 2 via a modem 127 and then the telephone line 111.

In the third embodiment, when the terminal unit 3 receives the control signal which the main unit 2 transmits at regular intervals, the telephone number of a subscriber (user) in its coded form is added to the utilization data which is stored in the RAM 126 in the terminal unit 3. Resulting data are output from the modem 127, and transmitted to the main unit 2 via the telephone line 111. Since radio communications are generally of broadcasting nature, the control signal derived from the main unit is simultaneously received by all the subscribers through satellite link. In practice, however, many terminal units are connected to the transmitter side 2 over the telephone line. If all the subscribers attempt to access the main unit 2 simultaneously to transfer data to the main unit 2, a line busy state occurs frequently, degrading traffic of the line. To avoid this, the assignment of dedicated line or particular frequencies to subscribers is contemplated. But such a scheme is not only uneconomical but also infeasible in reality when a large number of subscribers are handled. In view of this difficulty, this embodiment allows each terminal unit 3 to contain a delay processing means 128 with different delay time width. A unit of delay time width is set to the duration from the moment the terminal unit 3 accesses the main unit 2 via the telephone line 111, followed by the upload of the utilization data to the main unit 2, to the moment the line is disconnected. A plurality of terminal units 3 are provided with different delay time amounts in steps of a unit delay time. This prevents a line busy state which would occur when the main unit 2 is called simultaneously. The main unit 2 normally possesses a plurality of lines, and, depending on the number of lines, the terminal units may be grouped. In each group of terminal units, delay processing is performed. Several delay processing means are contemplated as follows: a delay is provided by routing data output from the CPU 125 through a delay buffer to the modem; a delay is provided by altering an arithmetic expression for the internal clock of the CPU 125. Selection of delay means is an option. Once the utilization data are thus transferred to the main unit 2, the main unit 2

identifies each telephone number, and calculates the utilities rate for each terminal unit 3. The main unit 2 has an internal database in the form of data table indicating unit price for each utilities service. When the main unit 2 receives data, the main unit 2 refers the data to the data table, and calculates the sum. The utilities rate is thus calculated, the consumer is billed using any proper means.

In this embodiment, a single type of public utilities service is handled. If the digital integrating meter 124 is capable of handling a plurality of types in parallel and if the RAM 126 stores the public utilities rates on a per type basis, the control signal can specify the type of service to allow the terminal unit to upload arbitrarily selected utilization data to the main unit. The transmitter side thus functions as a public utilities rate management system. Once such a system is established, a subscriber who is equipped with a terminal unit needs no modification in the existing public utilities service payment method. The host station can thus perform billing and collecting operation in a timely and smooth manner. Thus, an efficient public utilities rate billing system results.

Claims

1. A billing system in radio communications comprising:

   a main unit (2) having a host computer (4) with a database (74) for storing data of various types and a transceiver (6) for radio communications, and

   a plurality of terminal units (3) each having a receiver block for receiving said data of various types from said main unit, and a transmitter (16; 62) for transmission to the main unit,

   wherein said main unit (2) adds to each data a data identification code unique to the type of said each data, and then transmits said each data with the data identification code,

   each of said plurality of terminal units, having its unique terminal identification code, stores sequentially the data identification codes of the data which have been read into the terminal unit, out of the data transmitted from said main unit, and forms, upon receipt of a control signal transmitted by said main unit at regular intervals to request the transfer of utilization information, data streams each comprising a stored data identification code and a terminal identification code for enabling the calculation of service fees by use of the data streams,

   wherein said database (74) of said main unit (2) stores toll value-added information as said data of various types, and said main unit (2) comprises an input port in said receiver block (72) for receiving service fee signals from said terminal units (3), to which input port a telephone line (77) is directly coupled for carrying said service fee signals from said terminal units, and further comprises an acting value-added information service billing line (78) for enabling billing of services requested at a terminal unit by a telephone network provider, wherein said value-added information is transmitted from said main unit to a requesting terminal unit via said transceiver and includes the terminal identification code of the requesting terminal and fee information corresponding to the transmitted value-added information, and wherein said requesting terminal unit, after completion of processing the received value-added information, sends said data stream including fee information to said main unit via said telephone line (77) and said main unit connects to said acting value-added billing line (78) for a duration of time according to said received fee information.

2. The billing system in radio communications according to claim 1, wherein said radio communications are satellite communications and/or terrestrial communications.

3. The billing system in radio communications according to any of the preceding claims, wherein an example of said data of various types is data containing a program required for executing a computer video game.

4. The billing system in radio communications according to any of the preceding claims, wherein a signal transmitted from said main unit (2) is scrambled, and said terminal unit (3) is provided with a descrambler (10).

5. The billing system in radio communications according to any of the claims 1 to 4, wherein said main unit (2) stores pricing data on a per data type basis in a data table, and calculates information service fees per each terminal unit by referring the data streams transmitted from the terminal unit to said data table.

6. The billing system in radio communications according to any of the claims 1 to 4, wherein said terminal unit (3) stores pricing data on a per data type basis in a data table, calculates information service fees, by referring data identification codes which were stored prior to the reception of said control signal from said main unit (2), to said data table, and sends resulting information service fee data to said main unit.

7. The billing system in radio communications accord-

ing to any of the preceding claims, wherein a mode of modulation for the transmission is frequency modulation, and said terminal unit (3) comprises a digital signal processing block (43) which converts a received signal into a digital signal.

8. The billing system in radio communications according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said data identification code- comprises two kinds of pricing information, namely, pricing information on a per unit data basis and pricing information on a per unit time basis, and billing is selectively made by unit data or by unit time in accordance with the data executed by said terminal unit (3).

9. The billing system in radio communications according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the transmission from said main unit (2) to said terminal unit (3) is via satellite communications.

10. The billing system in radio communications according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said telephone line (77) is a digital telephone line.

11. A billing system in radio communications according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said terminal unit calculates service fees based on data identification codes stored in a utilization status counter (98) referring to fee conversion data which the main unit (2) transmits at regular intervals, said service fee information is sent to a fee conversion adaptor (99) connected to said terminal unit (3), and the signal provided from the adaptor is used to control an integrating meter (100) which indicates the public utilities rate of, typically, the consumed amount of any one of electricity, gas and water supplies.

12. The billing system in radio communications according to claim 11, wherein said integrating meter (100) is an AC watthour integrating meter, said fee conversion adaptor (99) converts information service fee data into an analog current value which is equivalent to the utilities rate of electricity equal to the information service fee, and said integrating meter is driven by the current output by said fee conversion adaptor.

13. The billing system in radio communications according to claim 11, wherein said integrating meter (100) is a digital integrating wattmeter, said fee conversion adaptor (99) converts information service fee data into a digital signal which is equivalent to the utilities rate of electricity equal to the information service fee, and said integrating meter is driven by the digital signal output by said fee conversion adaptor.

14. The billing system in radio communications according to claim 11, wherein said integrating meter (100) is a digital integrating gas meter, said fee conversion adaptor (99) converts information service fee data into a gas volume data equivalent to the utilities rate of gas supply equal to the information service fee, and said integrating meter is controlled by the digital signal output by said fee conversion adaptor.

15. The billing system in radio communications according to claim 11, wherein said integrating meter (100) is a digital integrating water meter, said fee conversion adaptor (99) converts information service fee data into a water volume data equivalent to the utilities rate of water supply equal to the information service fee, and said integrating meter is controlled by the digital signal output by said fee conversion adaptor.

16. A billing system in radio communications according to any of the claims 1 to 10, wherein said main unit (2) is coupled to each of said plurality of terminal units (3) via both a radio link (1) and a telephone line (111, 112), each of said plurality of terminal units is provided with a digital integrating meter (124) which measures the consumed amount of one or more types of public utilities services, typically electricity, gas and water supplies, said each terminal unit is further provided with a memory (126) for storing the consumed amount as consumption data, said each terminal unit is provided with means (127) which uploads the consumption data stored in the memory to said main unit via the telephone line in response to said control signal which the main unit transmits as a satellite signal, and said each terminal unit is provided with delay means (128) which determines the timing at which each of the plurality of terminal units accesses said main unit and said each delay means in said terminal units provide respective different delay times.

17. The billing system in radio communications according to claim 16, wherein said main unit (2) transmits, as said data of different types, toll value-added information to said terminal unit (3) via said radio link (1), and said terminal unit has means for processing said value-added information.

18. The billing system in radio communications according to claim 16 or 17, wherein said radio link (1) is a satellite link.

19. The billing system in radio communications according to claim 17, wherein said terminal unit (3) uploads the frequency of utilization of said value-added information as well as said consumption data to said main unit (2) or uploads the information service fee of said value-added information as well as said consumption data to said main unit.

Patentansprüche

1. Buchungssystem im Funkverkehr, das folgendes aufweist:

   eine Haupteinheit (2) mit einem Hostcomputer (4) mit einer Datenbank (74) zum Speichern von Daten verschiedener Arten und einem Transceiver (6) für Funkverkehr, und
   eine Vielzahl von Endgeräteeinheiten (3) mit jeweils einem Empfängerblock zum Empfangen von Daten verschiedener Arten von der Haupteinheit und einem Sender (16; 62) zur Übertragung zur Haupteinheit,
   wobei die Haupteinheit (2) zu allen Daten einen Datenidentifikationscode hinzufügt, der eindeutig zur Art der jeweiligen Daten ist, und dann die jeweiligen Daten mit dem Datenidentifikationscode überträgt,
   wobei jede der Vielzahl von Endgeräteeinheiten mit ihrem eindeutigen Endgeräteidentifikationscode die Datenidentifikationscodes der Daten sequentiell speichert, die aus den von der Haupteinheit übertragenen Daten in die Endgeräteeinheit gelesen worden sind, und, auf einen Empfang eines in regelmäßigen Intervallen durch die Haupteinheit übertragenen Steuersignals zum Anfordern der Übertragung von Nutzungsinformationen hin, Datenströme ausbildet, die jeweils einen gespeicherten Dateninformationscode und einen Endgeräteinformationscode aufweisen, um die Berechnung der Servicegebühren unter Verwendung der Datenströme zu ermöglichen,
   wobei die Datenbank (74) der Haupteinheit (2) Informationen mit hinzugefügtem Gebührenwert als die Daten verschiedener Arten speichert und die Haupteinheit eine Eingangsanschlußstelle in dem Empfängerblock (72) zum Empfangen von Servicegebührensignalen von den Endgeräteeinheiten (3) aufweist, mit welcher Eingangsanschlußstelle eine Telefonleitung (77) zum Übertragen der Servicegebührensignale von den Endgeräteeinheiten direkt gekoppelt ist, und weiterhin eine Servicebuchungsleitung (78) Informationen mit hinzugefügtem wirkenden Wert aufweist, um ein Buchen für bei der Endgeräteeinheit angeforderte Dienste durch einen Telefonnetzwerk-Betreiber zu ermöglichen, wobei die Informationen mit hinzugefügtem Wert von der Haupteinheit zu einer anfordernden Endgeräteeinheit über den Transceiver übertragen werden und den Endgeräteeinheiten-Identifikationscode der anfordernden Endgeräteeinheit und Gebühreninformationen entsprechend den übertragenen Informationen mit hinzugefügtem Wert enthalten, und wobei die anfordernde Endgeräteeinheit nach einem Beenden der Verarbeitung der empfangenen Informationen mit hinzugefügtem Wert den Datenstrom mit Gebühreninformationen über die Telefonleitung (77) zu der Haupteinheit sendet, und die Haupteinheit eine Verbindung zur Buchungsleitung (78) für Informationen mit wirkendem für eine Zeitdauer gemäß den empfangenen Gebühreninformationen herstellt.

2. Buchungssystem im Funkverkehr nach Anspruch 1, wobei der Funkverkehr Satellitenkommunikationen und/oder terrestrische Kommunikationen aufweist.

3. Buchungssystem im Funkverkehr nach einem der vorangehenden Ansprüche, wobei ein Beispiel der Daten verschiedener Arten Daten sind, die ein Programm enthalten, das zum Ausführen eine Computer-Videospiels erforderlich ist.

4. Buchungssystem im Funkverkehr nach einem der vorangehenden Ansprüche, wobei ein von der Haupteinheit (2) übertragenes Signal verschlüsselt ist, und die Endgeräteeinheit (3) mit einem Entschlüssler (10) versehen ist.

5. Buchungssystem im Funkverkehr nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 4, wobei die Haupteinheit (2) Preisgebungsdaten auf einer Basis pro Datentyp in einer Datentabelle speichert und Informationsservicegebühren pro jeder Endgeräteeinheit durch Bezugnahme auf die von der Endgeräteeinheit zu der Datentabelle übertragenen Datenströme berechnet.

6. Buchungssystem im Funkverkehr nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 4, wobei wobei die Endgeräteeinheit (3) Preisgebungsdaten auf einer Basis pro Datentyp in einer Datentabelle speichert, Informationsservicegebühren durch Beziehen von Datenidentifikationscodes, die vor dem Empfang des Steuersignals von der Haupteinheit (2) gespeichert wurden, auf die Datentabelle berechnet, und resultierende Informationsservicegebührendaten zur Haupteinheit sendet.

7. Buchungssystem im Funkverkehr nach einem der vorangehenden Ansprüche, wobei eine Modulationsbetriebsart für die Übertragung eine Frequenzmodulation ist, und die Endgeräteeinheit (3) einen Digitalsignalverarbeitungsblock (43) aufweist, der ein empfangenes Signal in ein digitales Signal umwandelt.

8. Buchungssystem im Funkverkehr nach einem der vorangehenden Ansprüche, wobei der Datenidentifikationscode zwei Arten von Preisgebungsinformationen aufweist, nämlich Preisgebungsinformationen auf einer Basis pro Einheitsdaten und Preis-

gebungsinformationen auf einer Basis pro Einheitszeit, und ein Buchen durch Einheitsdaten oder durch eine Einheitszeit gemäß den Daten selektiv durchgeführt wird, die durch die Endgeräteeinheit (3) ausgeführt werden.

9. Buchungssystem im Funkverkehr nach einem der vorangehenden Ansprüche, wobei die Übertragung von der Haupteinheit (2) zu der Endgeräteeinheit (3) über Satellitenkommunikationen erfolgt.

10. Buchungssystem im Funkverkehr nach einem der vorangehenden Ansprüche, wobei die Telefonleitung (77) eine digitale Telefonleitung ist.

11. Buchungssystem im Funkverkehr nach einem der vorangehenden Ansprüche, wobei die Endgeräteeinheit Servicegebühren basierend auf in einem Nutzungsstatuszähler (98) gespeicherten Datenidentifikationscodes unter Bezugnahme auf Gebührenumwandlungsdaten berechnet, welche die Haupteinheit (2) in regelmäßigen Intervallen überträgt, die Servicegebühbreninformationen zu einem Gebührenumwandlugsadapter (99) gesendet werden, der mit der Endgeräteeinheit (3) verbunden ist, und das vom Adapter gelieferte Signal zum Steuern eines Zählers (100) verwendet wird, der den Preis der Leistungen der öffentlichen Versorgungsbetriebe für typischerweise die verbrauchte Menge irgendeiner einer Elektrizitäts-, einer Gas- und einer Wasserversorgung anzeigt.

12. Buchungssystem im Funkverkehr nach Anspruch 11, wobei der Zähler (100) ein Wechselstrom-Wattstundenzähler ist, der Gebührenumwandlungsadapter (99) Informationsservicegebührendaten in einen analogen Stromwert umwandelt, der äquivalent zum Nutzungspreis für die Elektrizität ist, der gleich der Infromationsservicegebühr ist, und der Zähler durch den durch den Gebührenumwandlungsadapter ausgegebenen Strom angetrieben wird.

13. Buchungssystem im Funkverkehr nach Anspruch 11, wobei der Zähler (100) ein digitaler Leistungszähler ist, der Gebührenumwandlungsadapter (99) Informationsservicegebührendaten in ein digitales Signal umwandelt, das äquivalent zum Nutzungspreis für die Elektrizität ist, der gleich der Informationsservicegebühr ist, und der Zähler durch das durch den Gebührenumwandlungsadapter ausgegebene digitale Signal angetrieben wird.

14. Buchungssystem im Funkverkehr nach Anspruch 11, wobei der Zähler (100) ein digitaler Gaszähler ist, der Gebührenumwandlungsadapter (99) Informationsservicegebührendaten in Gasvolumendaten umwandelt, die äquivalent zum Nutzungspreis für die Gasversorgung ist, der gleich der Informationsservicegebühr ist, und der Zähler durch das durch den Gebührenumwandlungsadapter ausgegebene digitale Signal gesteuert wird.

15. Buchungssystem im Funkverkehr nach Anspruch 11, wobei der Zähler (100) ein digitaler Wasserzähler ist, der Gebührenumwandlungsadapter (99) Informationsservciegebührendaten in Wasservolumendaten umwandelt, die äquivalent zum Nutzungspreis für die Wasserversorgung ist, der gleich der Informationsservicegebühr ist, und der Zähler durch das durch den Gebührenumwandlungsadapter ausgegebene digitale Signal gesteuert wird.

16. Buchungssystem im Funkverkehr nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 10, wobei die Haupteinheit (2) mit jeder der Vielzahl von Endgeräteeinheiten (3) über sowohl eine Radioverbindung (1) als auch eine Telefonleitung (111, 112) gekoppelt ist, jede der Vielzahl von Endgeräteeinheiten mit einem digitalen Zähler (124) versehen ist, der die verbrauchte Menge einer oder mehrerer Arten öffentlicher Versorgungsdienste mißt, und zwar typischerweise Elektrizitäts-, Gas- und Wasserversorgungen, jede Endgeräteeinheit weiterhin mit einem Speicher (126) zum Speichern der verbrauchten Menge als Verbrauchsdaten versehen ist, jede Endgeräteeinheit mit einer Einrichtung (127) versehen ist, die die im Speicher gespeicherten Verbrauchsdaten über die Telefonleitung in Antwort auf das Steuersignal herauflädt, das die Haupteinheit als Satellitensignal überträgt, und jede Endgeräteeinheit mit einer Verzögerungseinrichtung (128) versehen ist, die die Zeit bestimmt, zu der jede der Endgeräteeinheiten auf die Haupteinheit zugreift und jede der Verzögerungseinrichtungen in den Endgeräteeinheiten jeweilige unterschiedliche Verzögerungszeiten liefert.

17. Buchungssystem im Funkverkehr nach Anspruch 16, wobei die Haupteinheit (2) als die Daten verschiedener Art Informationen mit hinzugefügtem Gebührenwert zu der Endgeräteeinheit (3) Über die Radioverbindung (1) überträgt, und die Endgeräteeinheit eine Einrichtung zum Verarbeiten der Informationen mit hinzugefügtem Wert aufweist.

18. Buchungssystem im Funkverkehr nach Anspruch 16 oder 17, wobei die Radioverbindung (1) eine Satellitenverbindung ist.

19. Buchungssystem im Funkverkehr nach Anspruch 17, wobei die Endgeräteeinheit (3) die Nutzungshäufigkeit der Informationen mit hinzugefügtem Wert sowie die Verbrauchsdaten zur Haupteinheit (2) herauflädt, oder die Informatonsservicegebühr der Informationen mit hinzugefügtem Wert sowie

die Verbrauchsdaten zur Haupteinheit heraufladt.

Revendications

1. Système de facturation pour radiocommunications comprenant:

   une unité principale (2) comprenant un calculateur hôte (4) qui comporte une base de données (74), pour mémoriser des données de divers types, et un émetteur-émetteur (6) de radiocommunications, et
   une pluralité d'unités terminales (3), chacune comprenant un bloc récepteur, pour recevoir lesdites données de divers types de ladite unité principale, et un émetteur (16; 62) pour transmettre vers l'unité principale,
   ladite unité principale (2) ajoutant, à chaque donnée, un code unique d'identification de donnée au type de chacune desdites données, puis transmettant chacune desdites données avec le code d'identification de donnée,
   chaque unité terminale de ladite pluralité d'unités terminales ayant son code d'identification unique de terminal mémorisant successivement les codes d'identification de données qui ont été lus dans l'unité terminale, hors des données transmises par ladite unité principale, et formant, à la réception d'un signal de commande transmis par ladite unité principale à intervalles réguliers, pour demander le transfert d'informations d'utilisation, des paquets de données, chacun comprenant un code d'identification de donnée mémorisé et un code d'identification de terminal afin de pouvoir calculer des taxes de service en utilisant les paquets de données,
   ladite base de données (74) de ladite unité principale (2) mémorisant une information de valeur ajoutée de péage, comme lesdites données de divers types, et ladite unité principale (2) comprenant un port d'entrée, dans ledit bloc récepteur (72) pour recevoir des signaux de taxe de service desdites unités terminales (3), auquel est directement couplée une ligne téléphonique (77) pour transmettre lesdits signaux de taxe de service à partir desdites unités terminales, et comprenant encore une ligne de facturation de service d'une information de valeur ajoutée agissante (78) pour permettre la facturation des services demandés à une unité terminale par un fournisseur de réseau téléphonique, ladite information de valeur ajoutée étant transmise à partir de ladite unité principale vers une unité terminale demanderesse via ledit émetteur et comprenant le code d'identification de terminal de l'unité terminale demanderesse et une information de taxe correspondante à l'information de valeur ajoutée transmise, et
   ladite unité terminale demanderesse, après avoir terminé le traitement de l'information de valeur ajoutée reçue, envoyant ledit paquet de données, y compris l'information de taxe à ladite unité principale via ladite ligne téléphonique (77) et ladite unité principale connectant ladite ligne de facturation de valeur ajoutée agissante (78) pour une durée de temps selon ladite information de taxe reçue.

2. Système de facturation pour radiocommunications suivant la revendication 1, dans lequel lesdites radios sont des communications par satellites et/ou des communications terrestres.

3. Système de facturation pour radiocommunications suivant l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel un exemple de données de divers types est des données contenant un programme demandé pour exécuter un jeu vidéo sur calculateur.

4. Système de facturation pour radiocommunications suivant l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel un signal transmis à partir de ladite unité principale (2) est embrouillé et dans lequel ladite unité terminale (3) est pourvue d'un désembrouilleur (10).

5. Système de facturation pour radiocommunications suivant l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 4, dans lequel ladite unité principale (2) mémorise des données de prix sur une base de type par données dans une table de données et calcule des taxes de service d'information par chaque unité terminale en se référant aux paquets de données transmis à partir de l'unité terminale à ladite table de données.

6. Système de facturation pour radiocommunications suivant l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 4, dans lequel chaque unité terminale (3) mémorise des données de prix sur une base de type par données dans une table de données, calcule des taxations de service d'information en se référant aux codes d'identification de données qui étaient mémorisés à la réception dudit signal de commande à partir de ladite unité principale (2) vers ladite table de données, et envoie les données de taxation, qui en résulte, de service d'informations à ladite unité principale.

7. Système de facturation pour radiocommunications suivant l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel un mode de modulation pour la transmission est la modulation de fréquence et

dans lequel ladite unité terminale (3) comprend un bloc de traitement de signaux numériques (43) qui convertit un signal reçu en signal numérique.

8. Système de facturation pour radiocommunications suivant l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel ledit code d'identification de données comprend deux sortes d'information de prix, c'est-à-dire une information de prix sur une base de données par unité et une information de prix sur une base de temps par unité, et la facturation est choisie par données d'unité ou par temps par unité suivant les données exécutées par ladite unité terminale (3).

9. Système de facturation pour radiocommunications suivant l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel la transmission de ladite unité principale (2) à ladite unité terminale (3) est des communications via satellites.

10. Système de facturation pour radiocommunications suivant l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel ladite ligne téléphonique (77) est une ligne téléphonique numérique.

11. Système de facturation pour radiocommunications suivant l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel ladite unité terminale calcule des taxations de service basées sur des codes d'identification de données mémorisés dans un compteur d'état d'utilisation (98) en se référant aux données de conversion de taxation que l'unité principale (2) transmet à intervalles réguliers, ladite information de taxation de service est envoyée à un adaptateur de conversion de taxation (99) connecté à ladite unité terminale (3), et le signal fourni par l'adaptateur est utilisé pour commander un intégrateur (100) qui indique le taux d'utilisation publique de pratiquement la quantité consommée de l'une quelconque des fournitures d'électricité, de gaz et d'eau.

12. Système de facturation pour radiocommunications suivant la revendication 11, dans lequel ledit intégrateur (100) est un intégrateur de watt-heures à courant alternatif, ledit adaptateur de conversion de taxation (99) convertit les données de taxe de service d'information en une valeur de courant analogique qui est équivalente au taux d'utilisation d'électricité égal à la taxation de service d'information, et ledit intégrateur est alimenté par la sortie de courant par ledit adaptateur de convertion de taxation.

13. Système de facturation pour radiocommunications suivant la revendication 11, dans lequel ledit intégrateur (100) est un watt-mètre intégrateur numérique, ledit adaptateur de convertion de taxation (99) convertit les données de taxation de service d'information en signal numérique équivalent au taux d'utilisation d'électricité égal à la taxation de service d'information, et ledit intégrateur est commandé par une sortie de signal numérique par ledit adaptateur de convertion de taxation.

14. Système de facturation pour radiocommunications suivant la revendication 11, dans lequel ledit intégrateur (100) est un intégrateur numérique de gaz, ledit adaptateur de convertion de taxation (99) convertit les données de taxation de service d'information en une donnée de volume de gaz équivalente au taux d'utilisation de fourniture de gaz égal à la taxation de service d'information, et ledit intégrateur est commandé par une sortie de signal numérique par ledit adaptateur de convertion de taxation.

15. Système de facturation pour radiocommunications suivant la revendication 11, dans lequel ledit intégrateur (100) est un intégrateur numérique d'eau, ledit adaptateur de convertion de taxation (99) convertit les données de taxation de service d'information en une donnée de volume d'eau équivalente au taux d'utilisation de fourniture d'eau égal à la taxation de service d'information, et ledit intégrateur est commandé par une sortie de signal numérique par ledit adaptateur de convertion de taxation.

16. Système de facturation pour radiocommunications suivant l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 10, dans lequel ladite unité principale (2) est couplée à chaque ut de ladite pluralité d'unités terminales (3) par, à la fois, une liaison radio (1) et une ligne téléphonique (111, 112), chaque ut de ladite pluralité d'unités terminales est pourvue d'un intégrateur numérique (124) qui mesure la quantité consommée d'un ou de plusieurs types de sévices d'utilisation publics, pratiquement des fournitures d'électricité de gaz et d'eau, chacune desdites unités terminales est, de plus, pourvue d'une mémoire (126) pour mémoriser la quantité consommée comme donnée de consommation, chacune desdites unités terminales est pourvue de moyen (127) qui charge la donnée de consommation mémorisée dans la mémoire dans ladite unité principale, via la ligné téléphonique, en réponse audit signal de commande que l'unité principale transmet comme un signal satellite, et chaque unité terminale parmi lesdites unités terminales est pourvue de moyen à retard (128) qui détermine le moment auquel chacune de la pluralité d'unités terminales accède à ladite unité principale et chacun desdits moyens à retard dans lesdites unités terminales fournit des différents temps de retard respectifs.

17. Système de facturation pour radiocommunications suivant la revendication 16, dans lequel ladite unité

principale (2) transmet, comme dites données de types différents, des informations de valeur ajoutée à péage à ladite unité terminale (3) via ladite liaison radio (1), et ladite unité terminale comporte un moyen pour traiter ladite information de valeur ajoutée.

18. Système de facturation pour radiocommunications suivant la revendication 16 ou 17, dans lequel ladite liaison radio (1) est une liaison satellite.

19. Système de facturation pour radiocommunications suivant la revendication 17, dans lequel ladite unité terminale (3) charge la fréquence d'utilisation de ladite information de valeur ajoutée ainsi que lesdites données de consommation dans ladite unité principale (2), ou charge la taxation de service d'information de ladite information de valeur ajoutée ainsi que lesdites données de consommation dans ladite unité principale.

FIG. 1

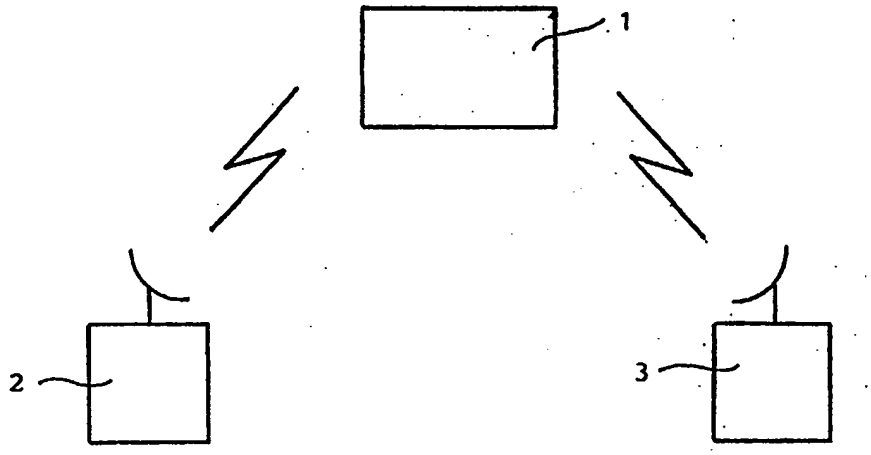
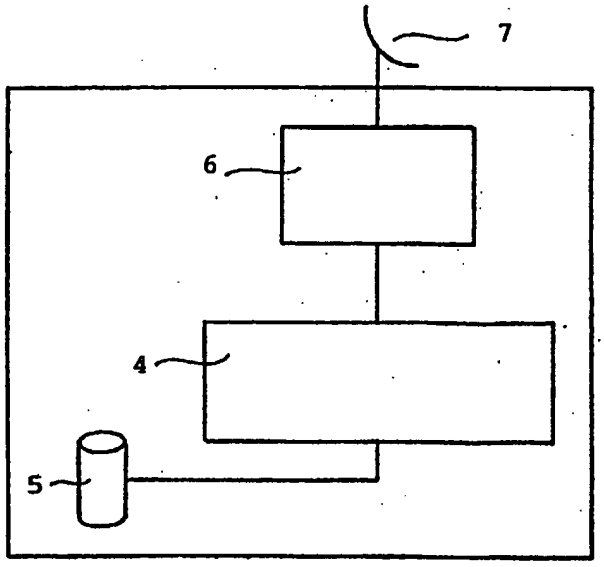
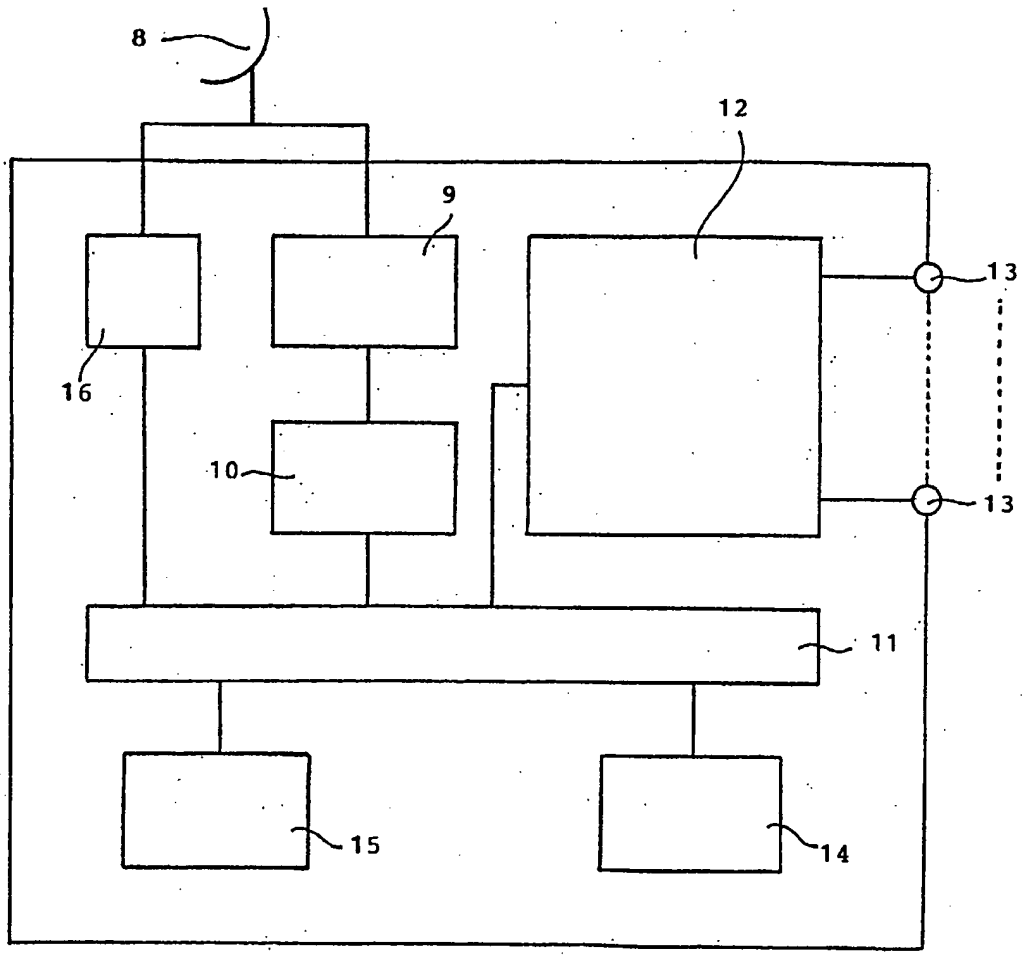


FIG. 2



2

FIG. 3



3

FIG. 4

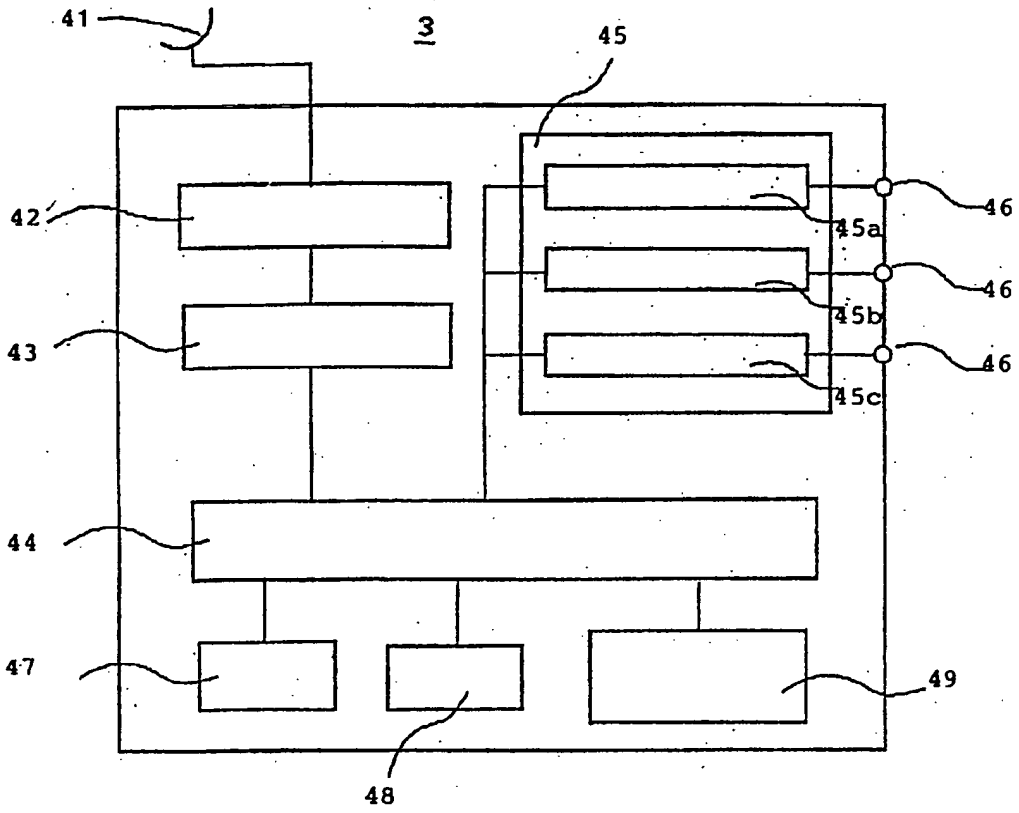


FIG. 5

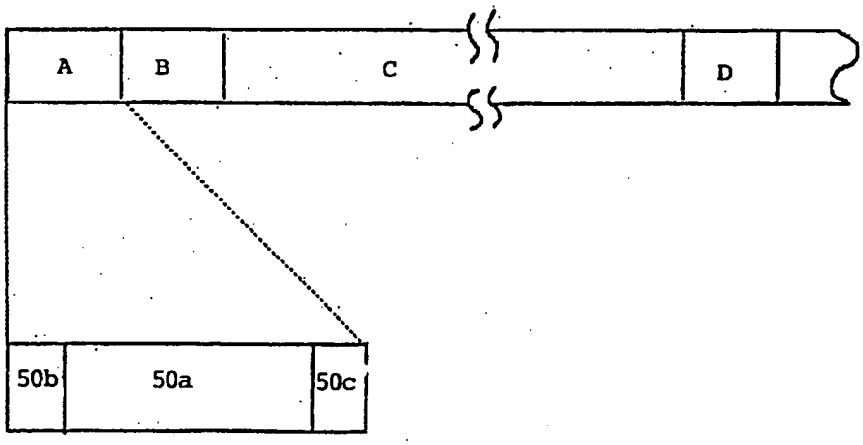


FIG. 6

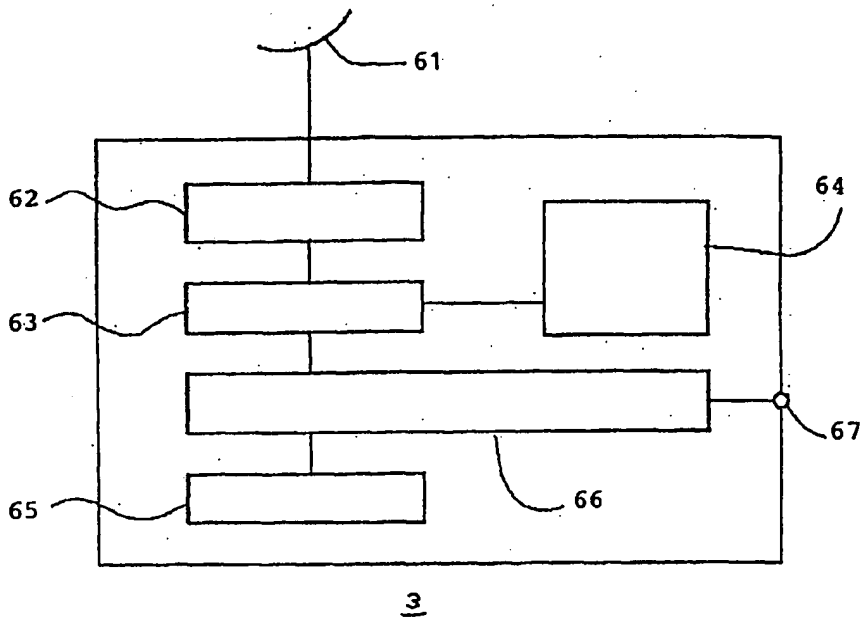


FIG. 7

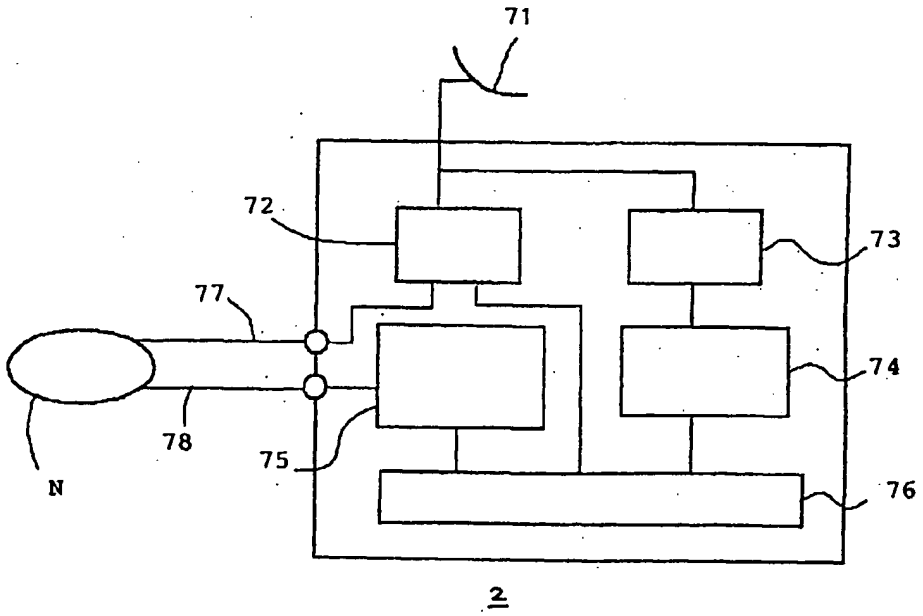


FIG. 8

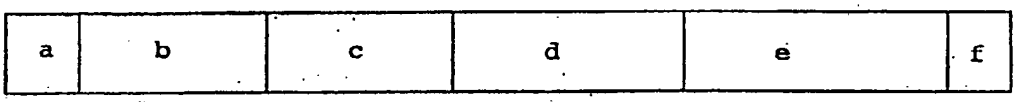


FIG. 9

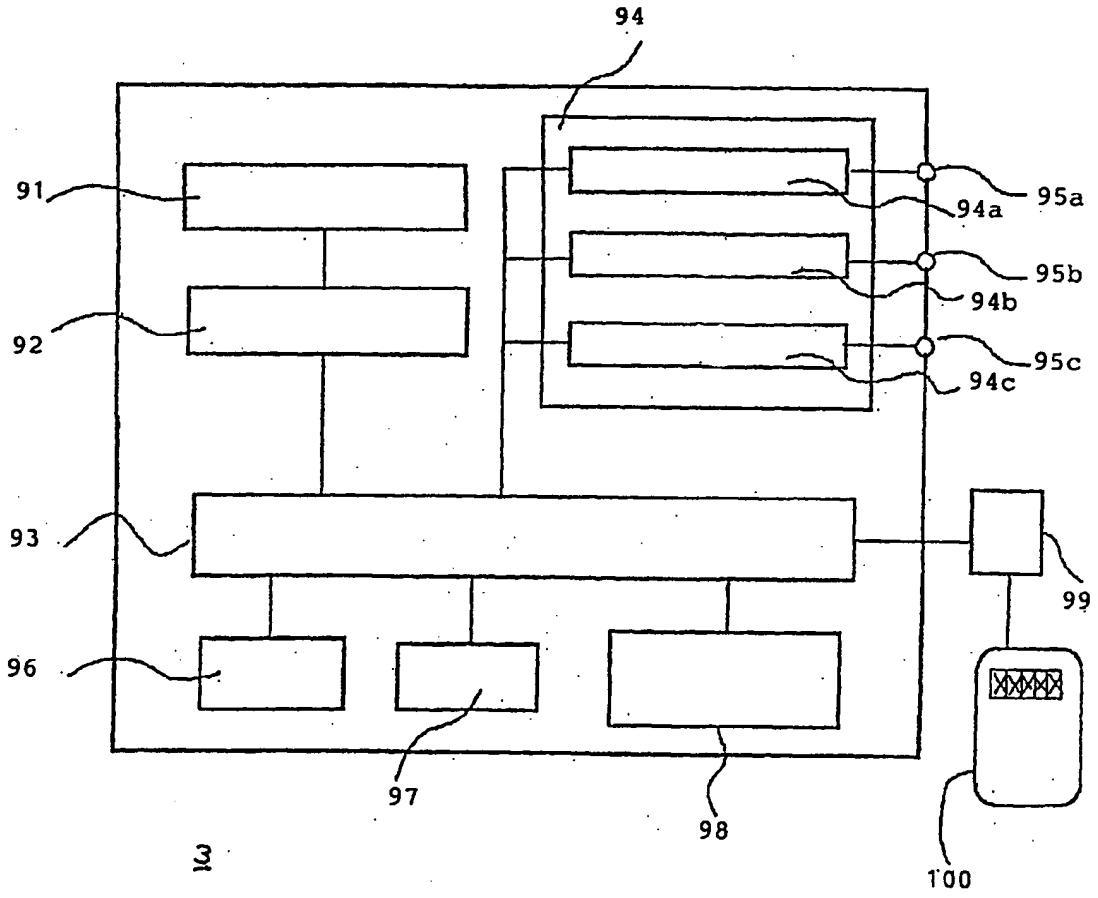


FIG. 10

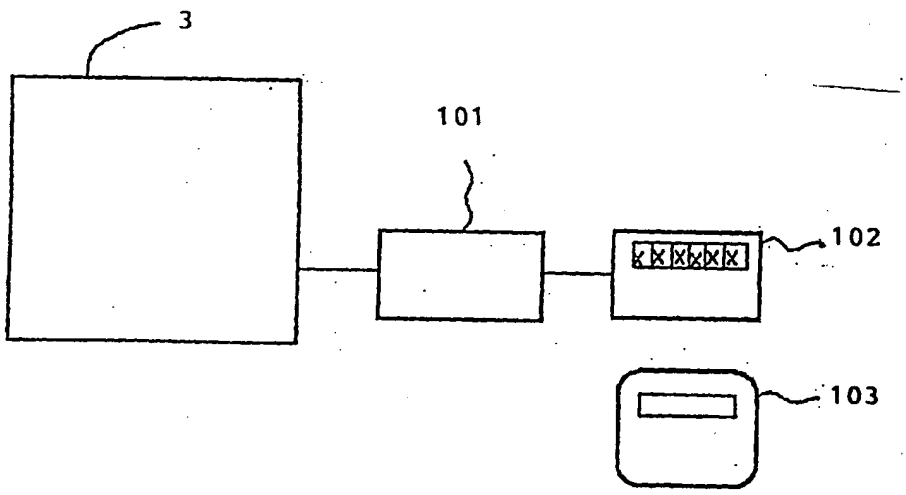


FIG. 11

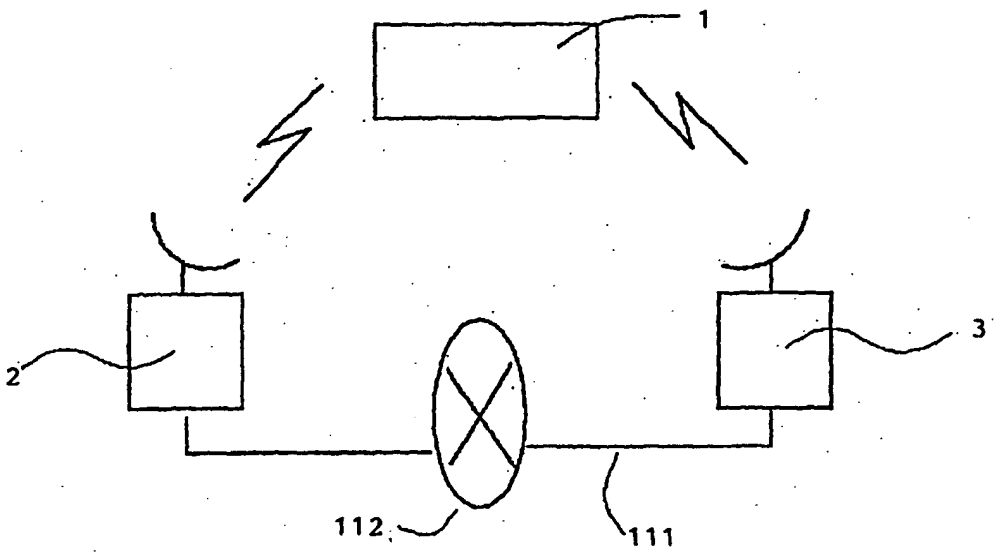
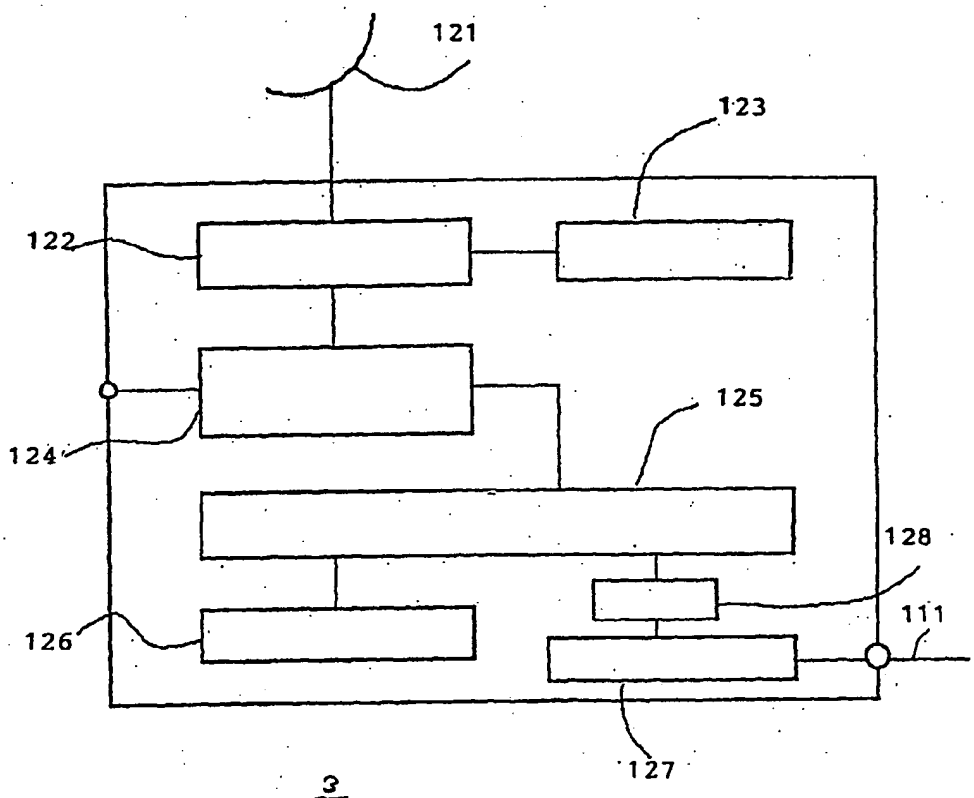


FIG. 12



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